DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 132 359 CE 009 075

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TITLE Career Guidance: Roles for Action.
INSTITUTION B'nai B'rith, Washington, D.C. Career and Counseling Services.
PUB DATE Sep 74
NOTE 9p.; Speech presented at the Howard County Career Counseling and Guidance Seminar (Howard Community College, Columbia, Md., April 25, 1974)
AVAILABLE FROM B'nai B'rith Career and Counseling Services, 1640 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 ($1.00)
JOURNAL CIT Counselor's Information Service; v29 n3 Special Supplement Sep 1974

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Career Awareness; *Career Education; Career Planning; *Counseling Effectiveness; *Counseling Goals; *Counselor Role; Educational Responsibility; Elementary Secondary Education; *Occupational Guidance

ABSTRACT

New roles are outlined for counselor action within the elementary school setting, the middle years, and junior and senior high school grades. The points enumerated are considered to be directions in which the counseling profession must go to provide the necessary leadership in career education and career guidance. It is noted that challenges created by changes in the world of work require counselors to assume a new role within the framework of career education, and that teachers, counselors, administrators, and other members of the school team, as well as businessmen, must all cooperate in the common goal of providing students with the necessary skills to pursue the career goals of their choice. (TA)

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Volume 29, Number 3 | SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT | September 1974

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CAREER GUIDANCE: ROLES FOR ACTION

Anne E. Garrett*

If a major purpose of career guidance is to assist youth in achieving a balance between self-concept and post-school lifestyle, then we, as counselors, have much to be concerned about. It is becoming increasingly evident that we are not always adequately preparing youth for the world of work.

For all too long, some members of the counseling profession have supported the myth that a college education is the surest route to occupational success. The very nature of occupations is changing drastically. Work values, skills required for entry into various occupations, and types of occupations are constantly subject to change. It has been projected by the U.S. Department of Labor that only about 20 percent of the occupations in the next decade will require four years of college or more. We must, therefore, dispense with the philosophy that only the college-bound are worthy of a counselor's time and attention. Career guidance programs must consider the needs of *all* students.

The current concept of "career education" is a new attempt to meet the needs of the individual. Yet first, we should refer to the roots of this philosophy. For it is career guidance and career development, heretofore solely the responsibility of the counselor, that provide the major working constructs of career education. The direction and emphasis of career guidance concepts have significantly expanded. Guidance is no longer solely concerned with providing assistance with specific vocational or career decisions. In the past, some counselors attempted to prepare students for the world of work by providing specific vocational information that was often outdated by the time students were in a position to use it. Now, however, we are faced with the pressing need for redirection and expansion of the conceptualization of career guidance.

Until recently, career development and career guidance have been carried out primarily at the junior and senior high school levels. In the author's opinion, this, in itself, is in conflict with the critical stages of career development. The experiences of youth upon leaving high school and entering the world of work also contradict this practice.

It is clear that career guidance must begin with the formative years and continue through the school years and beyond. Lifelong training and exposure are the only ways

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by which we can adequately prepare individuals for the changing future. In his poem, "Leaves of Grass," Walt Whitman aptly summarizes the concept of career development:

"There was a child went forth every day;
And the first object he look'd upon, that object he became;
And that object became a part of him for a day, or a certain part of the day,
Or for many years, or stretching cycles of years."

The availability of more intense and additional assistance to youth in the areas of self-awareness and career exploration, refinement of career choice and plans, and career preparation and placement is an expanded objective of all professionals involved in career guidance. The rapid changes facing us in the world of work make the need for career guidance programs more intense and apparent. Fitting into the new models of career education, the role of leadership is with the counselor. It is the counselor, though lacking in sufficient knowledge, who still has the greatest expertise in relation to the world of work.

Attention should be devoted to the counselor's new role in career education. School systems across the country must see the value of freeing up the counselor's time. Counselors must move out from behind their desks and from under the endless amounts of paperwork that take up so much of their time. They must be allowed to devote more of their attention to organizing and carrying out efficient and effective career guidance programs.

Within the framework of career education, guidance counselors have the responsibility to assist youth in the following areas:

- self-awareness and understanding of the individual's aptitudes, abilities and interests as well as limitations
- learning about job opportunities and requirements in the world of work
- making realistic occupational choices
- adequately preparing the individual for the occupation which one plans to enter, as well as for careers which, as yet, are not in existence
- securing employment, and
- adjusting to the occupation and the future likelihood of change[1]

In order to meet these new responsibilities, we as counselors, have the obligation to devise appropriate career guidance programs for all types of students at all educational levels. Counselors can serve on the educational team in a leadership capacity. Counselors, teachers and administrators must make a cooperative and concentrated effort to work effectively together in constructing top quality career education and career guidance programs.

WHAT ARE TO BE THE NEW ROLES FOR COUNSELOR ACTION?

Within the elementary school setting, the counselor has several roles to fill. First, the counselor should serve as a consultant to teachers not only in the planning of career education curricula, but also in arranging field trips for students to observe firsthand the world of work. And second, the counselor should plan and conduct career guidance activities.

The following career development concepts should be examined at the elementary level:

- an awareness and acceptance of self is important throughout one's lifetime
- the dignity and worth of people need to be recognized

[1] John B. Stevenson, *An Introduction to Career Education*, (Worthington, Ohio: Charles A. Jones Publishing Company, 1973), p. 61.

- occupations exist for a purpose
- work means different things to different people
- individuals differ in interests, abilities, attitudes and values
- education and work are interrelated
- occupational supply and demand play an important role in career planning
- occupations influence lifestyles
- people can learn to do more than one type of job
- societal structure and needs influence the nature of work[2]

Programs in the elementary grades should allow students the opportunities for self-awareness and understanding as well as initial career awareness experiences. In kindergarten through the sixth grade, students should be helped to develop an awareness of the many occupational careers available as well as an awareness of self in relation to the world of work. By introducing children to the world of work early in their educational lives, foundations are laid for wholesome attitudes toward work and workers in all occupational fields. At the same time, students may be better prepared for career exploration, planning and preparation activities in the grades ahead.

By using varied techniques, children may be helped to better understand themselves and the occupational world. Parents, for example, may serve effectively as models—they can be invited into the classroom wearing their occupation's uniform or carrying the equipment of their trade, to talk about their jobs. Weekly group activities using puppets, stories and pictures may also be used to portray the many occupational and social roles in our society.

In the junior and senior high school grades, it is necessary that a greater range of curricular and guidance options be made available. This is the stage of career development at which the counselor's knowledge about the world of work and the career planning process becomes increasingly important.

Under the career education concept, the middle years, or Grades 7 to 10, should be years in which students are encouraged to explore key occupational areas and assess their own interests and abilities. In addition, counselors must play a vital role in helping students develop decision-making skills applicable not only to specific situations but also to later choice points. Students should be helped to develop an awareness of the essential factors in decision-making including values, alternatives, probabilities and possibilities, consequences of choosing or not choosing certain options, and action plans.

Students should also gain experience meaningful to the decision-making process itself. A technique useful for helping youngsters in this process might include simulated adult decision-making exercises in the areas of family, education, occupations and leisure. Ross Braland and William Sweeney have developed an exemplary guidance program for junior high school students. Their program includes a career week in the seventh grade, a two-week simulation unit in the eight grade, and concludes with a unit in the ninth grade which emphasizes the importance of decision-making. The primary function of the career week in seventh grade is to focus students' attention on the many variables that must be considered in order to make sound occupational decisions. Through the introduction of specific occupational requirements, students become cognizant of personal limitations that might curtail entrance into a certain occupational field or area.[3]

In the simulation approach, eighth grade students plan the life of a peer on a hypothetical basis. In this exercise, students plan a typical week in the student's life during each of his high school years. Time spent in class, study, leisure activity, part-time employment (if applicable) and interaction with family must be

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 274-285.

[3] Ross Braland and William Sweeney, "A Different Approach to Vocational Counseling in Junior High, *School Counselor*, March 1970, pp. 260-262.

included. Changes in the student's life such as the death of a parent, purchase of a car, or attaining a scholarship must also be considered. Through this model, students may gain insight into ways in which problems might be solved and how specific solutions may affect future situations.

The final unit in the ninth grade directly involves students in making decisions about themselves. The initial segment of this unit includes a review of the decision-making process; discussions on the importance of values, feelings and interests, and grades; and consideration of colleges, trade, technical and business schools, on-the-job training programs and construction of high school programs. Following this, students prepare their own high school programs to fit their future plans and goals.

General information on manpower and economic trends should also be provided to middle (or junior high) school youth. Through the use of multi-media resources, students may also obtain ideas about the future of various occupational fields.

In grades 11 and 12, students are expected to plan for "specific" occupations or intermediate educational alternatives. Career guidance programs at the elementary and junior high school levels, therefore, must provide students with the proper background for identifying those occupational clusters that seem to hold most promise for them.

Just a decade or more ago, the senior high school counselor was expected to call each student into his or her office for a "conference." In some cases, this conference lasted for a half-hour, if that, and involved a discussion of the student's coursework and future plans. In addition, not all counselors had degrees in counseling and guidance or related fields. When I was in high school, one was lucky if he or she saw the counselor just once—it meant that you were considered a "good" student, or that you hadn't caused your teachers any problems.

Now, however, the scene has changed—the counselor is a trained professional. Senior high school guidance counselors are expected to do more, *and they do*. Nevertheless, we must take increasing responsibilities within the framework of career education. Counselors must be instrumental in helping students acquire occupational skills and knowledge for entry level employment or advanced occupational training. In addition, students should be able to tie high school experiences into generalized career goals as well as develop acceptable job attitudes.

In order to be truly effective, there are certain elements that must necessarily be included in career guidance programs at the senior high level. Of primary importance is knowledge of self. This is essential in order for anyone to appropriately make decisions about his or her involvement in the world of work.

In his *Introduction to Career Education*, John B. Stevenson lists areas of information which should be included in career guidance programs with respect to individual self-appraisal. They include:

1. What are my vocational, professional, career interests: What are my life goals?
2. What specific and general aptitudes do I possess?
3. What is my intellectual level of functioning?
4. How do I perceive myself in terms of personality?
5. Are the perceptions I have of myself consistent and congruent? Am I capable of utilizing my talents as I perceive them in a real career in which I have interest and want to work?
6. What assistance can be provided to enhance the individual's process of self-appraisal and self-evaluation without imposing a decision upon the individual?[4]

[4]Stevenson, *op. cit.*, pp. 206-207.

Assuming that students have made an adequate self-appraisal, knowledge of a selected occupation or occupational area is basic to making career decisions. This, of course, means general and specific knowledge about the field as well as the developmental career aspects of opportunities in one's chosen field of work.

The following questions by Stevenson, which the author has expanded, stress the importance of occupational information in career planning:

- What types of positions exist within the field of work?
- What does a person do in these positions?
- What temperamental characteristics should a person possess in order to be successful in this career both in the field in general and in specific positions within the field?
- What are the typical duties of this career?
- What are the aptitudes and interests required?
- What are the physical and educational requirements for the particular field of work and its specialties?
- What are the prospects for advancement to levels of increasing responsibility?
- What is the present job market in this field?
- What are the projections as to the future outlook of this field?
- What is the supply and demand of this occupational field at both the state and national levels?
- What salary can one expect?
- How does the salary compare to other occupations?
- Where may appropriate training be obtained?
- What is the nature and content of this training?
- By what means is training received? For example, apprenticeships, on-the-job training or specific courses of study in vocational, technical or four-year programs?
- Is financial assistance available?[5]

It is at this juncture in students' lives that the counselor's expertise in the world of work is called upon to its fullest. Students should acquire information necessary to execute career plans. Thus, the counselor must have adequate knowledge about where to obtain information on all types of work. Further, this information must be relayed to youth in an interesting manner. Group counseling, role playing, job analysis, the utilization of resource persons and the presentation of career information through multi-media are just a sample of the many techniques that may be used. In addition, it is necessary for some students to be involved in cooperative work experiences. Work-study programs are also effective tools by which students may gain initial work experience in areas related to their chosen occupational field.

Counselors must meet these challenges and responsibilities by adequate preparation. Following are roles for action that the counselor should take in order to be better prepared for effective utilization of his or her skills and knowledge.

- Counselors must have sufficient time to go into the world of work to gain first hand knowledge of the intimate workings of the many and varied types of jobs in business, industry and labor. This is essential in order for counselors to become familiar with the "inside" story of careers and occupations, as well as keeping up-to-date with recent developments. Just as important is the fact that such experiences may result in the discovery of new resources–speakers, sources for field trips, on-the-job internships for students and future job placement.
- The dissemination of occupational information is one of the functions of counselors. Yet some of the information presently available is sorely lacking in facts that are basic to realistic career choice and planning. Not only must counselors be judicious in the selection and use of materials, but they

[5] *Ibid*, pp. 207-208.

also have an obligation to their students to supply information presently not included in most occupational literature. Until recently, much of the guidance literature was geared toward the "average, white, middle-class male." Accurate career information must also include a discussion of opportunities for minority groups, women and the handicapped. It is imperative that counselors have this knowledge or know where to locate it. Counselors cannot be satisfied with merely helping individuals make "safe" decisions. We must be prepared to provide accurate and appropriate information about educational and occupational opportunities *most suitable for each individual.*

- In conjunction with the role of disseminator, counselors should have ready access to information relating to the manpower needs of the future. Youngsters now in kindergarten will be entering occupations that are not yet in existence. Counselors must be able to obtain information on projections of future needs so that youth will not prepare for jobs that may be phased out. Once counselors have this information, they should then be willing to present it to students so they may be able to make more accurate career decisions.
- It is essential for counselors to keep up-to-date with the increasing number of alternatives to traditional post-secondary education. By the 1980's, a major percentage of jobs will be filled by persons with special skills requiring technical and vocational training. In addition to a familiarity with the increasing number of vocational and technical possibilities, counselors need to be cognizant of the many forms of learning techniques now being used. The growth of experimental forms of education at the secondary and post-secondary school levels is but one example of the response to the growing demand for relevance in education.
- Counselors need to thoroughly recognize the rapid changes in lifestyles and socio-economic conditions occurring in our society. Increased mobility and a greater emphasis on service occupations are resulting in more frequent job changes. It is likely that by 1980, high school graduates will change jobs far more often during their lifetimes than their counterparts currently in the labor market. At the same time, career guidance procedures must be increasingly responsive to the shift in values that is in evidence. Thus, counselors must keep abreast of these changes so as to help youngsters plan for and enter into a wide variety of occupations. Career education must ultimately lead to the initiation of new types of jobs and careers so obviously needed.
- Parents should play an active role in the process of career development. It is of great importance that parents have accurate information about the world of work so that they do not present outdated ideas to their youngsters. In order for them to adequately fill this role, however, counselors should be ready to help them acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for assisting their children in making realistic career plans and decisions.
- Technology will serve an important role in future career guidance programs. It will be the function of counselors to see that computer technology and the various audio-visual aids are harnessed in order to be of most value. Technology should serve as effective tools in career guidance and career education programs, not as ends in themselves.
- Career guidance programs need to move in the direction of providing outreach and extension services to the individual. In this way, counselors may be more responsive to individuals in the surroundings in which they are confronted with making career decisions and plans. Theoretical knowledge is not sufficient–practical knowledge about, and experience in,occupations is necessary for realistic decisions to be made. Outreach programs in career education and guidance will be a great step toward assisting youth in this area.
- In order for career guidance programs to reach peak efficiency, it is the responsibility of counselors not only to furnish opportunities for individual change, but also to stimulate change in societal attitudes and structure. Counselors must assume leadership in responding to those conditions that either limit or deny individuals the opportunity to make full use of their uniqueness and abilities.
- Counselors must take an active role in research on career development and the formulation of career guidance interventions. Standards for evaluating career guidance programs and practices must be

further sophisticated. Counselors must also assume greater responsibility for the design and operation of training programs for future counselors who will disseminate the knowledge and skills necessary to develop community career education and career guidance programs. As leaders in career development, counselors will also have to be accountable to the public about objectives and outcomes of the various practices and programs with which they will be involved.

- The career development process must be able to provide individuals with skills to work productively in the changing occupational world. In addition to technical skills, it will be necessary for individuals to possess the capacity to learn rapidly, to cope with immediate and long range conflicts arising from change and to act both as teachers and leaders. Counselors should help individuals realize their goals by more sophisticated diagnostic techniques and planning.
- New career life styles and an increased interest in unusual occupations on the part of youth may require marked curriculum changes in the schools. If this proves to be the case, counselors will be able to serve a vital function in the planning and implementation of career education programs that will meet the needs of youth.
- It will be important for counselors to serve as liaison persons between education and industry. Through cooperative efforts a realistic implementation of career guidance programs for the "real world" can be attained. Career education and career guidance may also serve to maximize worker adaptability and readiness for retraining. At the same time, there must be active participation by the community. In this way, students may see the interrelationship between their levels of schooling and experience.
- Through interdisciplinary team efforts, more effective combinations of instruction, counseling and curriculum change may be developed. In this way, counselors may effectively utilize skills of teachers and subject specialists to augment career guidance in the classroom.
- Research and demonstration projects relating to the training and use of peer counselors have been initiated in several areas across the country. If the findings on this subject prove to be favorable, the future may well see the use of peer counselors not only at the college level, but in senior high schools as well. Thus, counselors should stand ready to take an active role in training programs for peer counselors.
- The growth of counseling in future years in elementary schools and colleges will most likely result in the development of a new specialization in career guidance programs. Counselors must take the initiative in the creation of these new roles as well as the establishment of guidelines for program practices.

The points enumerated are directions in which the counseling profession may go in order to provide the necessary leadership in career education and career guidance. Considerable gains have been made in career guidance, but much more needs to be done in order to meet the challenges created by ever-increasing changes in the world of work.

Counselors should assume a new role within the framework of career education. We must work more constructively and in a leadership capacity with other members of the educational team. The role of the teacher in career education and career development will be even more important with the counseling profession's support and encouragement.

The world of work is far too complex for any one profession to attempt the task before us. Teachers, counselors, administrators, and other members of the school team as well as businessmen must all cooperate in the common goal of providing students with the necessary skills to pursue the career goals of their choice.

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